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SHALL WE SMOKE ?

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The use of tobacco, for the good or ill of the individual and of the community, has not yet been weighed and judged by the general public, as has its kindred habit, the use of alcohol.

Sentence has been passed upon alcohol as a beverage: "It is good for nothing but to be cast out," and it is already denied entrance into the majority of wholesome, well-conducted homes. It is time that the attention and criticism of thoughtful people were given to the use of tobacco and to the many and varied influences and effects arising from it, and that the consensus of opinion be obtained, as to whether "my Lady Nicotine" be still allowed admission and toleration in homes where at present she holds sway, courted and welcomed and pandered to by men of all ranks and ages, and often without protest of the women.

Tobacco-smoking was introduced to the Anglo-Saxon family by Sir Walter Raleigh, about three centuries ago. He learned it from the half-savage tribes of Indians of "The New World." The use of tobacco was very limited for many years, but later it spread steadily, and during the last half century, very rapidly, to its present enormous patronage by millions of smokers, young and old, rich and poor, in every civilized land, and especially in this country. The total outlay for tobacco in the United States last year reached the enormous sum of \$1,200,000,000. Are the benefits derived from it in proportion to the time, money and physical energy spent in its consumption?

The question is primarily one of health, as to the effect of nicotine on the blood and organs of the smoker, and there is no doubt as to the answer. Medical research has exposed the evil results of the habit, and has marked the tobacco heart, the unsteady hand, the sight peculiarly affected in smokers, the irritated membranes of the throat and the lungs, and here and there the cancerous lip and tongue testifying to the work of the pipe,—every organ and tissue subject to the baneful effects of tobacco smoking.

Dr. J. H. Kellogg and his colleagues of Battle Creek Sanitarium, have for many years strongly condemned the habit, and have exposed and emphasized the evils arising therefrom, and the menace to the health in the use of nicotine. Its work is insidious, it steadily tends to the deterioration of the man. One expert on this subject, Daniel H. Kress, M.D., vice president of the Anti-Cigarette League,

states that the work of degeneration is most marked in the offspring of animals subjected to the fumes of nicotine, and that the young of those so subjected suffer most and are generally weak and defective, proving the deteriorating action of nicotine on the essential plasma of life. He so strongly senses the evils transmitted to the next generation that he says that if he could choose he would rather be the child of the average drinker than of the average smoker.

There are moral issues also to be weighed; for who can close his eyes to the disastrous effect upon the morals of the young resulting from the cigarette habit? The jails and prisons are largely filled with men scarcely more than youths, whose consciences have been more or less paralyzed and whose moral as well as physical development has been arrested by the habitual use of the cigarette. The school teacher early detects the pernicious influence at work in the boys who smoke, in loss of the keen sense of honor as well as in mental alertness. These youths grow to manhood with lower mental and moral vitality and with lower physical and nervous resources than they would otherwise have had. Besides, there is grave reason to believe that the insidious and narcotic effects of tobacco minimize in the man's judgment the importance of things "unseen and eternal," and defer the personal grappling with the problems of good and evil, of life and death, and hinder the soul from attaining that knowledge of God our Saviour, whom to know is eternal life. The significance of things spiritual grows less under the influence of tobacco.

Happily, most of the heroes of righteousness, both in civic affairs and in "the fight of faith," are men who have denied themselves this indulgence as out of harmony with the high standard of living demanded by their profession.

It is the privilege of each one who realizes the evil and far-reaching results of this popular but pernicious habit, to condemn it by influence and example, as one that is a handicap in the warfare of life, for both temporal and eternal issues, and by so doing help to establish and maintain a cleaner and more virile manhood.